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*Exploring the Translatability of Emotions: Cross-Cultural
and Transdisciplinary Encounters* ed. by Susan Petrilli and
Meng Ji (review)

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tions of semantic roles do. Thus, *verber* and *verbed* seem more like superficial labels, heuristic rules or rules of thumb rather than (formal) rules that actually exist in the mental grammar of speakers.

This leads to the conclusion that intransitivization with *se* does not need the concepts of *verber* and *verbed*. A simple rule using the traditional semantic roles and concepts is enough to explain intransitivization and replacement with *se*. For example, we can say that “in a transitive sentence, the participant that is more like an agent or a causer is the subject, and this participant is the one that is replaced by *se*.” In addition, while the author emphasizes throughout the book that *se* intransitivization applies to all cases, there are a few functions of *se* that do not seem to receive a plausible explanation through intransitivization. For example, while the author recognizes that in a sentence such as *Ella se bebió el café*, *se* contributes a meaning of telicity, the argument seems to be made that there is also intransitivization. However, it does not seem credible that the subject (*Ella*) is being replaced by *se* in sentences of this type.

This book will be of particular interest to teachers and learners of Spanish, as well as linguists interested in second language acquisition or second language teaching. It can be a good source of information and examples that can serve as the basis for a debate on how to define and use semantic roles in language teaching and learning.

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Petrilli, Susan, and Meng Ji, editors. *Exploring the Translatability of Emotions: Cross-Cultural and Transdisciplinary Encounters*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. Pp. 409. ISBN 978-3-030-91747-0.

This edited collection of fourteen essays is clearly interdisciplinary (note the subtitle of “Cross-Cultural and Transdisciplinary Encounters”), while substantially rooted in Peircean semiotics. The book is divided into four sections under the following topics: “On the Translatability of Emotions” (Part I), “Speaking Emotions Listening to the Body and to Others” (Part II), “Becoming Conscious of Emotions and Social Conditioning” (Part III), and “Expressing Emotions Between Mass-Medial and Rhetorical Figures” (Part IV).

Contrary to what the book title may imply, this volume is not primarily about the interlingual translatability of emotions, or the degree to which translating emotions across languages and cultures is possible. This topic only surfaces sporadically. In fact, one author, Torop, states that “the concept of emotion has not, as of yet, become a natural part of translation studies” (346), neither as something to be translated in the text nor as a phenomenon that affects the translation process. Instead, the translatability of emotions in this collection of essays most commonly refers to inter-semiotic translation, the fact that we have feelings/sensations that need to be interpreted and translated into language, first for ourselves to comprehend, and secondly, so we can communicate them to others. As Petrilli and Ponzio explain, “we always translate all our emotions to ourselves, which only in translation become ours” (64). These authors claim that, without the interpretation-translation process, our emotions would not even be perceivable.

Some of the most stimulating topics in this volume are discussed in multiple chapters, giving the reader several occasions to ponder them. For example, one such proposal is the idea that interpreting oneself is not necessarily easier than interpreting others. This view, which is attributed originally to Peirce, certainly seems counterintuitive. Can we really be so out of touch with our inner selves? Indeed, this appears to be the case. Colapietro states that “we are far from transparent to ourselves” (230), and similarly, “we are all too often mistaken about ourselves” (231). Another recurring motif is that emotions, at least for some semioticians, are social and not private. In chapter 5, Fontanille delves into this topic in detail and explains how affect is translated into emotion, at which point it becomes socialized, something that is recognizable, shareable and evaluable. Perhaps one of the ideas that most clearly underscores the social com-

ponent of emotions is the following aphorism from chapter 11: “Think before you speak, your face arrives before your words” (307). This serves as a reminder that our emotions are much more public than we might assume, to the extent that they can even betray us.

When we think about interlingual translation from one language to another, what we are translating is not the actual emotion, but the sign/word used to describe the emotion. As such, the labels attached to our messy and imprecise feelings can be overly simplistic. This is a point that Nöth emphasizes in chapter 3, where he also addresses the notion of “degrees of translatability” (104). It is not difficult to see how translating words from one language to another is more straightforward than, say, translating a painting into music. On the far extreme, certain signs (or qualisigns, using Peirce’s terminology), are simply untranslatable into language, such as the taste of salt. Perhaps for this reason, humans invented poetry, an attempt to put into words experiences and sensations that are theoretically impossible to express.

Given that we are currently living through apocalyptic times in which much research in the social sciences and humanities can seem irrelevant, we could all benefit from asking ourselves how our work impacts society. Some authors in this volume touch on this important perspective. In her introduction, Petrilli addresses this topic and mentions semioethics, the idea of humanizing emotions and “recovering the capacity for un-indifference toward the other” (6). Chapter 11 warns of the dangers of a society where people do not perceive emotions, which can only lead to disastrous consequences such as violence or illness. Chapter 12 reports on how emojis can be used to promote wellbeing in the healthcare sector. Concerning this last possibility, since I reside in the U.S. where the healthcare system is 100% dysfunctional, the idea of using emojis to promote wellbeing does not make me too hopeful for change.

This volume’s strengths are, first and foremost, the fascinating nature of the topics. For those of us who are not widely read in the semiotics of emotions, we can delve into just about any chapter and uncover questions that we might have never contemplated. Another strength is the breadth and depth of the authors’ and editors’ knowledge. For example, if people were to only read the introduction (by Petrilli) and chapter 2 (by Petrilli and Ponzio), they would come away with a significant understanding of this area of inquiry.

As is the case with most edited collections, some chapters are more rewarding than others, but this may also depend on the reader’s background and areas of interest. For instance, there are a few sections that get bogged down in jargon, which could deter the non-expert reader but might not be an issue for specialists. There are also segments where it almost feels like the wrong discipline (semiotics) is being applied to investigate questions that might warrant a more scientific approach, perhaps from the perspective of neuroscience, psychology, or even physiology. One author, Colapietro, acknowledges an unfamiliarity with the latest empirical research in social psychology and other fields related to his argument, while recognizing that his points are being made on a tentative basis. Another author, Danesi, makes reference to the lack of rigor in his own informal questionnaire given to seven students, although he does weave in cross-references from more robust studies to support his findings. Overall, though, it’s easy to see how this collection of essays would provide stimulating reading for graduate students and researchers in translation studies or other disciplines such as linguistics and psychology.

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The Royal Spanish Academy and the Association of Academies of the Spanish Language. *Nunca lo hubiera dicho: Los secretos bien guardados (o no tanto) de la lengua española.* Taurus, 2022. Pp. 254. ISBN 9788430623648.

Nunca lo hubiera dicho is the first volume of the series *Hablantes*, organized by the Royal Spanish Academy and the Association of Academies of the Spanish Language. The book is a collection